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COSTUME DECORATION.

LADIES in England now are borrowing hints in dress from the costumed figures in the art galleries, which is better perhaps than trusting blindly to the judgment of the dressmaker and the milliner. Some of the artists exhibiting recently in the Dudley Gallery supplied some excellent models of dress which a lady might carry out with little trouble, and wear with great effect. John Scott's "Mending the Banner" represented a dark girl with a clear complexion, wearing a charming dress of white and yellow brocade. In shape it was "a plain Princesse robe, cut square in front—a square which is narrow on the shoulders and wider below—edged with bands of yellow satin about two inches wide, with a row of pearl beads on the outer edge of the band; long sleeves, with a deep cuff of satin falling over the hands; pearl necklace; the hair cut straight over the forehead, and a yellow fillet binding the head." Nothing could be prettier for a dinner dress, to be worn by a brunette. Mr. Perugini's "Leila" was habited in a dress of old pink and old red combined, which, we are told, was exquisitely simple. The top of the bodice was "gathered longitudinally; the sleeves were gathered also, but horizontally; the width of the spaces between the cording being about an inch and a half. A Swiss bodice of the darker red velvet was cut with a pointed front, and round the top was a small box-plaited frill, with a small lace edging at the throat, while below it an Indian necklace in silver fitted close round the neck. A small bouquet of red chrysanthemums in front, completed the costume. The hair, growing low over the Greek forehead, was plainly parted and slightly waved."

PAINTED SILK MANTEL HANGINGS.

ACCORDING to a writer in *The London Queen*, in England the painted silk mantel valance and curtains are growing in popularity, some being straight, and others cut out in scallops. She says: "I saw some red silk ones painted with flying swallows in black, gray and white, the other day, which were very effective; also some composed of two shades of color. In one set the valance was of pale blue satin, caught up with rosettes of coffee-colored lace over silk of a deeper shade, on which were painted clusters of colored roses and leaves. There were three clusters painted, and each one filled in the space where the satin was lifted. The little hanging curtains were painted to correspond, and looped back with very large pale satin bows. Another combination was russet-brown plush and old-gold satin. The satin was painted, and the plush looped up over it. For ballroom decoration, two shades of satin, looped one over the other in this fashion, with trails of either real or artificial flowers and ferns, are to be seen, sometimes with the addition of lace and muslin; and if tastefully done, this would be equally pretty and suitable for boudoir and drawing-room. Trails of artificial shaded leaves are very effective, with satin of almost any hue. The empty grates are generally filled in with flowers or ferns, put into damp moss in a tin case, but occasionally a dainty



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arrangement of satin and lace is fitted in; and in the grate of the room where the painted blue silk and satin mantel valance and curtains were, a board has first been covered with silk, and then the lighter satin put on, and tied in the centre with a large bow of lace, forming a sort of hour-glass. On each side of the bow, on the silk surface, was painted a design of roses and leaves."

"TAKE a piece of Indian or Japanese embroidery," says a recent writer, "not the closely covered Indian work—we cannot afford to waste so much time—but say, a bit of picturesque embroidery on black satin. There is, perhaps, a bird—what kind of bird it may be

difficult to tell—but note the firm sweep of the lines in the wings and tail, the wonderfully delicate touches in the feathered plumage, the vivid realism of the eye, the beak, the talons. And then study those marvellous cloud and water lines, indicating beyond possibility of mistake the exact nature of the thing portrayed, yet with a single line or two. Reeds, rushes, or gorgeous exotics are all given with the same fidelity and graphic power, or a flock of double stitches will represent at once a flight of birds. The worker, in fact, has just the same power over the needle and silks or wools as an artist has over his pencil and palette."



As a branch of decorative art, etching on linen offers a varied and attractive field, and the interest in it has had a steady growth, not only among amateurs in household art, but among teachers of decorative drawing. Perhaps the most pleasing phase of this work is its application to napkins and doilies, making them blossom out of a condition of mere damask and linen into something of artistic interest agreeably provocative of comment and inquiry among those gathered around the tea or dinner-table. This result has caused many a hostess to thank the happy fortune that suggested her "decorated doilies."

Subjects suited to this class of ornamentation are innumerable. Nursery books afford an almost exhaustless field to draw upon, either for ideas to illustrate by original designing, or for the pictures themselves, which



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may be copied directly or adapted to the special object in view. Thus a set of finger-bowl or tea doilies might represent the story of Old Mother Hubbard. Miss Muffet, Tom the Piper's Son, Miss Bo-Peep, and many others from the



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caravan of nursery celebrities, may be transferred, in fashion more or less fanciful, to the corners of one's table-linen, and thus become permanent and orderly members of the domestic circle. Damask napkins, or doilies, and finger-bowl mats of linen, fringed and finished with drawn work, when decorated with figures, pleasing bits of foliage, grasses, birds, or butterflies, make charming wedding presents, especially when they embody the donor's own skill and taste; and the giver of such gifts need not fear that the bride will be perplexed by "duplicates" from another source.

Etching on linen is also admirably adapted to the decoration of chair-backs and tidies, a design for this purpose being given in the supplement to this number. The materials used depend upon the manner in which the tidy is to be finished. If the intention is to edge it with lace, the drawing should be made on fine white sateen, and the lace may be of any description that can be washed, according to the maker's taste. A more elaborate way of making up the tidy, however, is to use insertion also. That is, after allowing a suitable margin, sew the insertion around the sateen; add a border of sateen an inch or more in width, and then edge with the lace; the insertion and the band of sateen should be mitred at the corners and the lace frilled. If the design be etched on linen, the material may be fringed to a suitable depth, and the design framed in drawn work, either simple or intricate, as may best please the worker's fancy. This forms not only a novel and beautiful chair or sofa ornament and protection, but is thoroughly "sensible," a few moments sufficing to "laundry" it whenever it may be found necessary.

These etchings are made to serve charmingly for the decoration of toilet sets, by using fine linen lawn or cambric for sketching on, and lining the mats and cushion covers with pink or blue silk, or sateen. The color will show through the cambric enough to give a pleasing effect. A "splasher" made in the same way would be very attractive, showing the brightness of color in addition to the beauty of the etching. For this, a bold drawing of Jack and Jill, carrying the historical pail of water between them and doing considerable splashing, would be appropriate. Pillow-shams may also be treated as here described—or, if of heavier linen, may be edged with lace, or ruffles, or fringed, and finished with drawn work. The decorations may be chosen from a wide range of subjects. A branch of the apple-tree running diagonally across the pillow-cover, and supporting a group of sleeping birds, might be one, and on the other a similar branch, with the birds wide awake and warbling. Table-screens, hanging panels, window-shades, and other articles of household taste fall properly within the scope of this class of decoration, and the writer is now making designs for a threefold screen, six feet high, the panels being about thirty inches square. These are to be of heavy linen and movable. On four of the panels the seasons will be rather humorously presented, and on the others bold figure designs will be etched.

Some cannot draw faces successfully, but whoever can use the pencil for any kind of sketching can readily acquire some degree of skill with the pen, and most of the subjects indicated above are within the range of a limited talent for drawing. The severest outlines are surprisingly effective, and with growing skill the worker is delighted to find that most agreeable artistic results are possible with the pen on linen. Of course, the amateur who expects to encounter no difficulties whatever will very soon lay aside the work in disgust, and, like all poor workmen, will condemn the tools. This result is not peculiar to etching on linen, but is common to every branch of art industry.

In any undertaking the obstacles that seem to block the way effectually as we enter upon some new path, are overcome as we apply patience and intelligence to the task. Such application is essential in etching on linen, and with it even those who possess but moderate talent may count upon assured success.

FREDERIC A. WHITING.

OLD ENGLISH ENCAUSTIC TILES.

A PAPER on encaustic tiles was read by the Rev. G. Rowe at the recent annual meeting of the Yorkshire Architectural Society. He said that in mediæval times, when every part of a building was made to contribute to the general effect, they were not surprised to find the floors ornamented. This was done, in days when carpets were unusual, by means of tiles on which a decorated pattern had been burned, whence they were called encaustic tiles. The remains of the pavements thus formed still existed in many of our cathedrals and parish churches, or had been turned up from among the ruins of the abbeys which were destroyed at the dissolution, and the kilns at which they were baked had also been discovered.

As an architectural detail, tiles were subject to the same changes which happened to other branches of art, according to date. Hence they had Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular tiles. He had never met with any which could be possibly attributed to the Norman period, though there were some which were doubtful, and it was believed that they had adopted this mode of paving their churches in that time. In the thirteenth century they had the characteristic conventional foliage of the Early English style; in the fourteenth the Geometrical design and grotesque figures in vogue in Decorated buildings, and to this style probably belonged most of the shields of arms, while the Perpendicular period displayed the usual tabernacle work and tracery.



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